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(71) Applicant: **E LEAD ELECTRONIC CO., LTD.**
Changhua City (TW)

(72) Inventor: **Chen, Stephen**
Changhua City (TW)

(74) Representative:
Cross, Rupert Edward Blount et al
BOULT WADE TENNANT,
27 Funnival Street
London EC4A 1PQ (GB)

(54) A synchronous receiving/transmitting departure alarm

(57) A synchronous receiving/transmitting departure alarm including a receiver unit and at least one transmitter unit cooperating with the receiver unit. Once a holder of the transmitter unit is far away from the holder of the receiver unit by a preset distance, the holder of the receiver unit can be in time warned. The transmitter unit intermittently transmits a clock pulse signal and a

receiving circuit of the receiver unit is synchronously opened to receive the signal so as to judge whether the holder of the transmitter unit is within the preset distance. Therefore, a person under care or an article with the transmitter unit is prevented from missing or being lost. A mobile phone can be used with the alarm to inform the holder of the receiver unit of a phone call.

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Description

The present invention relates to departure alarms.

The proper care of the elderly, the young or the sick is becoming an increasingly important issue. Therefore, a departure alarm has been developed to effectively protect a person under care from going missing and to rescue a person needing help. In addition, it is often difficult to keep a precious article in sight so as to prevent the article from being stolen or lost. It often happens that an owner loses his/her precious property due to incaution or the precious property is stolen by a thief.

Figs. 1 and 2 show a conventional departure alarm which is developed for solving the above problems. Such an alarm includes a transmitter unit (Fig.1) and a cooperative receiver unit (Fig.2). As shown in Fig. 1, the transmitter unit is provided with a code selection switch 111, an encoder 112, a transmitting circuit 113 and an antenna 114. The code selection switch 111 serves to adjust the coupling code. After encoding by the encoder 112, the transmitting circuit 113 generates an r.f. signal which is transmitted via the antenna 114. As shown in Fig. 2, the receiver unit is provided with an antenna 121, a receiving circuit 122, a decoder 123, a code selection switch 124, an alarm control circuit 125 and a sound emitter 126. The signal from the transmitter unit 11 is received by the antenna 121 of the receiving circuit 122 and decoded by the decoder 123. Then the alarm control circuit 125 receives the signal. If the receiver unit fails to receive the signal, the alarm control circuit 125 triggers the sound emitter 126 to warn the user. However, in use, several shortcomings exist in the above arrangement as follows:

1. The conventional alarm employs the code selection switches 111 and 124 to couple the signal receiving and transmission of the receiving unit 12 and the transmitter unit 11. (Multiple transmitter units will lead to interference with each other). Therefore, one alarm system can only have one transmitter unit to couple with one receiver unit, and it is impossible to couple several transmitter units with one receiver unit 12 at the same time. This greatly limits the practical usage of the alarm.
2. The transmitter unit of the conventional alarm continuously transmits signals or intermittently transmits signals each of which lasts a quite long period. Therefore, the power consumption is high. Moreover, the receiver generally is active continuously. This shortens the battery life and it is necessary to replace the batteries frequently and keep many spare batteries available.
3. The proper reception and transmission of the signal of the conventional alarm are based on the code selection switches 111, 124 which have relatively complicated circuits and high cost. In addition, the respective components are bulky so that it is difficult to keep down the size of the alarm for portability.

Embodiments of the present invention provide a synchronous receiving/transmitting departure alarm which reliably prevents a precious article or a person under care from leaving a guardian out of a preset controllable range.

Embodiments of the present invention also provide an alarm by which a person under care can summon help if needed.

Embodiments of the present invention also provide an alarm in which one receiver unit can be coupled with multiple transmitter units at the same time.

Embodiments of the present invention can also provide an alarm which has the function of informing the user of a phone call.

According to the above objects, the synchronous receiving/transmitting departure alarm of the present invention includes a receiver unit and at least one transmitter unit cooperating with the receiver unit. The transmitter unit transmits a simple pulse signal at intervals of a fixed time and the receiver unit can automatically aim at the pulse clock of the transmitter unit, whereby during the period within which the transmitter unit stops transmitting the signal, the receiving circuit of the receiver unit is synchronously closed and before the next transmitted pulse is generated, the receiving circuit is again opened for receiving the signal from the transmitter unit. When the receiving circuit fails to receive the transmitted pulse signal once or continuously several times, the receiver unit by way of sound or vibration warns a holder of the receiver unit. The transmitter unit can also detect a signal from other electrical appliance (such as a mobile phone) or be controlled by a button which is able to change the wave form of the transmitted wave of the transmitter unit or make the transmitter unit stop transmitting the signal, whereby the receiver unit can generate a sound or vibration to warn the holder of the receiver unit. Several transmitter units can be coupled with one receiver unit at the same time, whereby the receiver unit can lock the time to transmit the pulse of each transmitter unit and accurately open the receiving circuit at proper time for receiving the pulses of the respective transmitter units.

Examples of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1 is a block circuit diagram of the transmitter unit of a conventional alarm;

Fig. 2 is a block circuit diagram of the receiver unit of a conventional alarm;

Fig. 3 is a block circuit diagram of a transmitter unit embodying the present invention;

Fig. 4 is a block circuit diagram of a receiver unit embodying the present invention;

Fig. 5 illustrates the timing of the units in one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 6 illustrates the timing of the units in another embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a block circuit diagram of another embodiment of the present invention; and
Fig. 8 illustrates the timing of the units in yet another embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to Figs. 3 and 4, the illustrated departure alarm includes at least one transmitter unit and a receiver unit.

The transmitter unit includes a pulse control circuit 22, a clock crystal, a transmitting circuit 24 and an antenna 25.

The receiver unit includes an antenna 31, a receiving circuit 32, a control circuit 33, a clock crystal 34, a receiving circuit controller 35 and a sound emitter or vibrating body 36.

The above alarm operates as follows:

1. The signal transmission of the transmitter unit:

The clock crystal 23 and the pulse control circuit 22 accurately control the time for transmitting a pulse and activating the transmitting circuit 24. The pulse generated by the clock crystal 23 and the pulse control circuit 22 is transmitted as a pulse signal through the transmitting circuit 24 and the antenna 25. This signal is a periodically transmitted clock pulse. The transmitting time is as shown in A of Fig. 5.

2. The signal receiving of the receiver unit:

The receiver unit is able to synchronise automatically with the clock pulses of the transmitter unit. The clock crystal 34 and the control circuit 33 serve to generate pulses at the same rate as the transmitter unit and accurately to control the receiving circuit controller 35 so as to keep the activation of the receiving circuit synchronous with the transmitting time of the transmitter unit as shown in B of Fig. 5. The signal received by the antenna 31 is identified by the receiving circuit 32 and the control circuit 33. If the received pulse signal is correct, the receiving circuit controller 35 deactivates the receiving circuit 32 at the proper time and waits for the next transmitted pulse signal. Before the next transmitted pulse signal is generated, the receiving circuit 32 is again activated for receiving the signal. In the case that the receiving circuit 32 fails to receive the transmitted pulse once or continuously several times, the sound emitter or the vibrating body 36 emits a sound or vibrates to warn the holder of the receiver unit. For example, when a person (such as an elderly person or child) or a precious article carrying the transmitter unit is more than a certain distance away from the holder of the receiver unit, making the receiver unit fail to receive the signal transmitted by the transmitter unit, the receiving unit will warn the holder thereof by way of sound or vibration so as to achieve a warning effect.

In use, one receiver unit can cooperate with more

than one transmitter unit. The receiver unit can lock on to the pulse transmission times of each transmitter unit as shown in Fig. 6. If the activation time of the receiver unit is E and the pulse transmission times of the respective transmitter units is C and D, the activation timing of the receiving circuit can be made to overlap and correspond to the transmitting times of each transmitter unit. Therefore, one receiver unit can cooperate with multiple transmitter units. For example, if the holder of the receiver unit needs to take care of a child and carry a mobile phone, transmitter units can be respectively installed on both the child and the mobile phone so as to prevent the child from going missing as well as prevent the mobile phone from being forgotten.

Referring to Fig. 7 which shows another embodiment of the present invention, a signal detecting circuit 21 is added to the transmitter unit, which can be triggered by a phone call detector or a button disposed on the transmitter unit. When the holder of the transmitter unit urgently needs help, the holder can press down a button disposed on the transmitter unit to activate the detecting circuit 21 so as to change the wave form of the transmitted signal of the transmitter unit or make the transmitter unit stop transmitting the signal, whereby the receiver unit can generate a sound or vibration to warn the holder of the receiver unit to come to the rescue. This embodiment is also applicable to a mobile phone fitted with the transmitter unit. When another person calls, the phone call detector will automatically trigger the detecting circuit 21 to remind the mobile phone owner to locate and answer the phone. By the above measures, during a certain period G, the wave form of the transmitted pulse is changed or the transmission is stopped (as shown in Fig. 8) so as to be distinguished from the time F of transmission of normal pulse and achieve a warning effect.

With the above arrangements, activation of the transmitter unit and receiver unit can be confined to pulses of some microseconds duration, so that battery life of the alarm is effectively prolonged and the power consumption is reduced. Also, the receiver unit and transmitter unit can be easily carried by the user and one receiver unit can cooperate with multiple transmitter units at the same time so as to achieve the functions of personal care, emergency rescue and phone call detection.

Claims

1. A departure alarm apparatus comprising a transmitter unit arranged to radiate an r.f. signal and a receiver unit arranged to receive the radiated signal whilst the transmitter remains within a predetermined distance of the receiver and to provide an alarm if the radiated signal is not received which may indicate that the transmitter has departed beyond said predetermined distance, characterised in

that said transmitter unit is arranged to transmit periodic pulses of r.f. energy and in that said receiver unit includes a receiver circuit and is synchronised with said transmitter unit to deactivate said receiver circuit following receipt of a pulse of r.f. energy from the transmitter unit and to reactivate said receiver circuit again in time to receive the next pulse of r.f. energy from the transmitter unit.

2. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said transmitted pulses of r.f. energy are short relative to the periods between successive transmitted pulses, and the duty ratio if the receiver circuit is corresponding low.
3. Apparatus as claimed in either of Claims 1 and 2, wherein said transmitter unit includes means responsive to an activation signal to modify or inhibit the transmitted energy pulses, whereby to cause the receiver unit to provide said alarm.
4. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the transmitter unit includes a manually operable control to generate said activation signal.
5. Apparatus as claimed in either of Claims 3 or 4, wherein the transmitter unit is used in cooperation with a telephone apparatus and said activation signal is generated on receipt of an incoming call signal by said telephone apparatus.
6. Apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim and including at least one additional transmitter unit arranged to transmit pulses of r.f. energy periodically at different times relative to said pulses transmitted by said first mentioned transmitter unit, and said receiver unit is also synchronised to activate and deactivate said receiver circuit to receive said pulses from said additional transmitter and to provide a distinguishable indication with the alarm to indicate which of the transmitter units is not being received.
7. Apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the receiver unit is arranged to alarm only if a predetermined successive number of r.f. energy pulses from a transmitter unit are not received.
8. A synchronous receiving/transmitting departure alarm comprising at least one transmitter unit and a receiver unit, wherein:

the transmitter unit includes a pulse control circuit, a clock crystal, a transmitting circuit and an antenna; and

the receiver unit includes an antenna, a receiving circuit, a control circuit, a clock crystal, a receiving circuit controller and a sound emitter or vibrating body, said alarm being characterized

in that the transmitter unit transmits a simple pulse signal at intervals of a fixed time and the receiver unit can automatically aim at the pulse clock of the transmitter unit, whereby during the period within which the transmitter unit stops transmitting the signal, the receiving circuit of the receiver unit is synchronously closed and before the next transmitted pulse is generated, the receiving circuit is again opened for receiving the signal from the transmitter unit, when the receiving circuit fails to receive the transmitted pulse signal once or continuously several times, the receiver unit by way of sound or vibration warning a holder of the receiver unit.

9. An alarm as claimed in Claim 8, wherein an electric wave detecting circuit is added to the transmitter unit, which can be triggered by a button disposed on the transmitter unit so as to change the wave form of the transmitted wave of the transmitter unit or make the transmitter unit stop transmitting the signal, whereby the receiver unit can generate a sound or vibration to warn the holder of the receiver unit for rescuing.
10. An alarm as claimed in Claim 8, wherein an electric wave detecting circuit is added to the transmitter unit, which can be triggered by a phone call detector disposed on the transmitter unit so as to change the wave form of the transmitted wave of the transmitter unit or make the transmitter unit stop transmitting the signal, whereby the receiver unit can generate a sound or vibration to inform the holder of the receiver unit of the call.
11. An alarm as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the receiver unit cooperates with more than one transmitter unit at the same time.

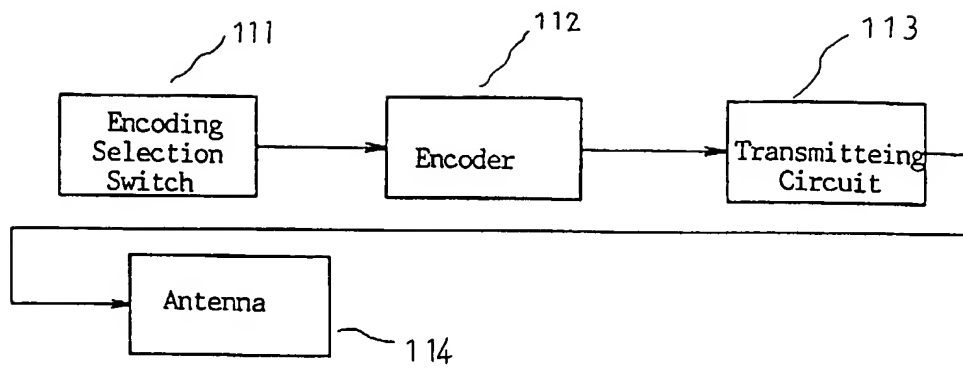


FIG. 1

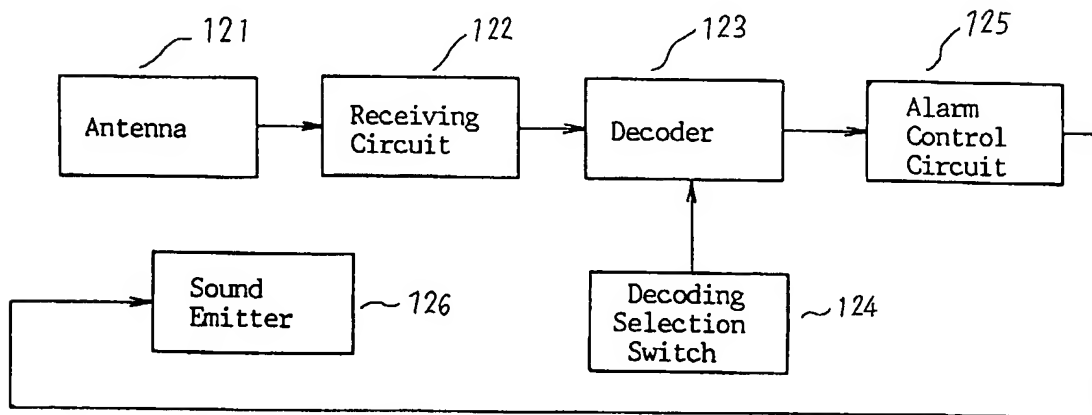


FIG. 2

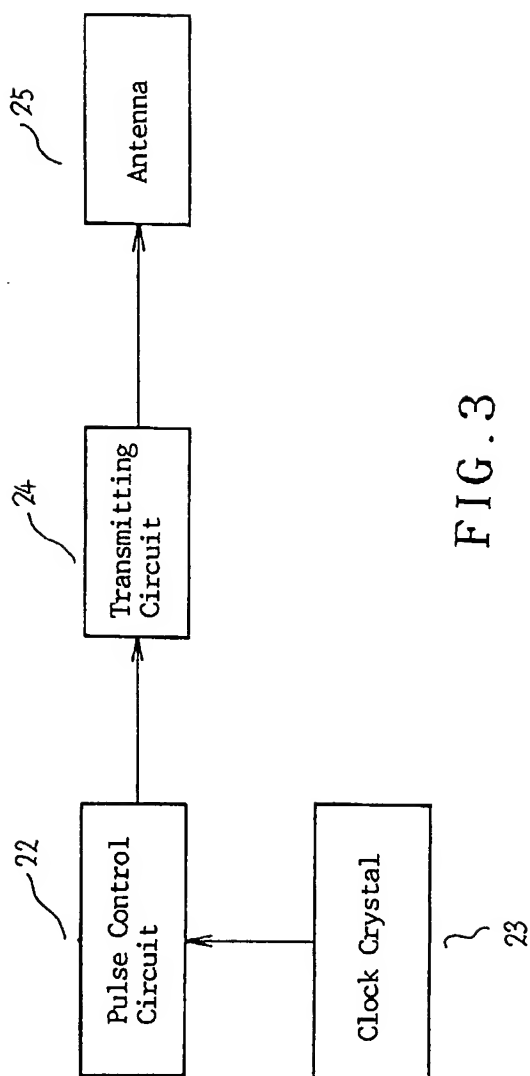


FIG. 3

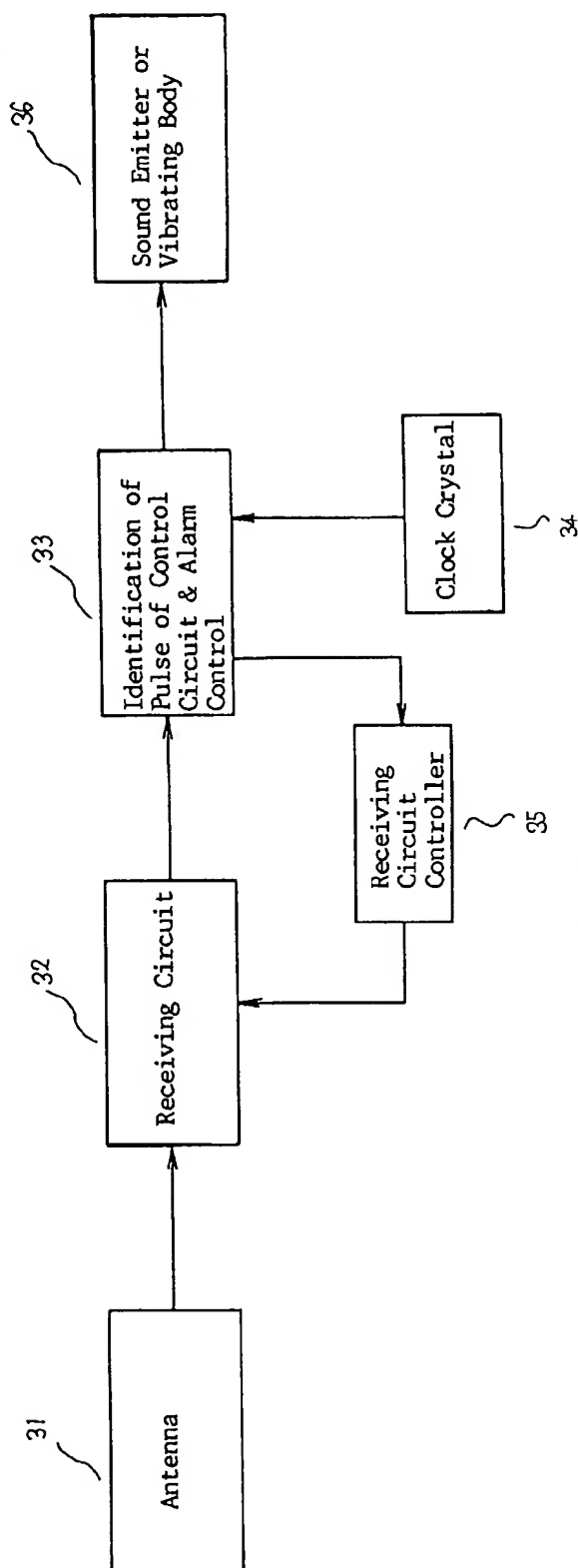


FIG. 4

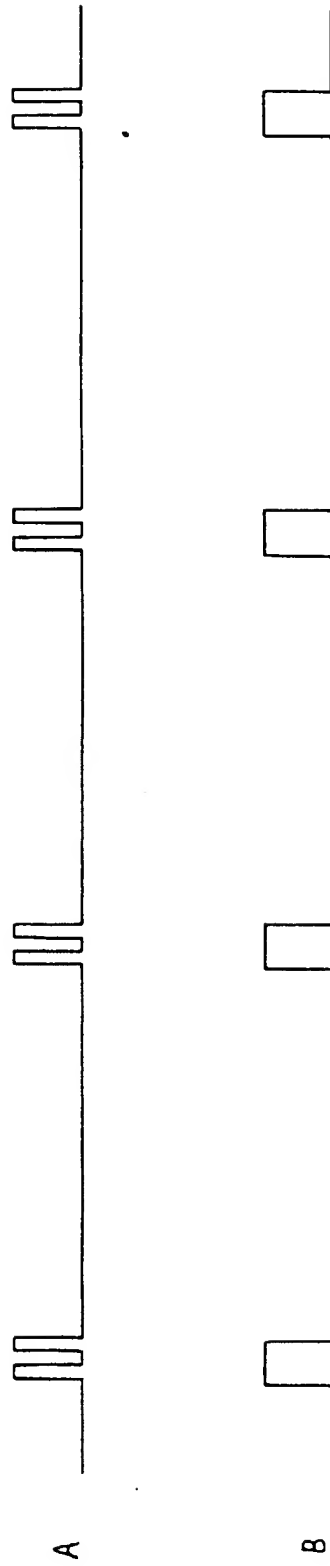


FIG. 5

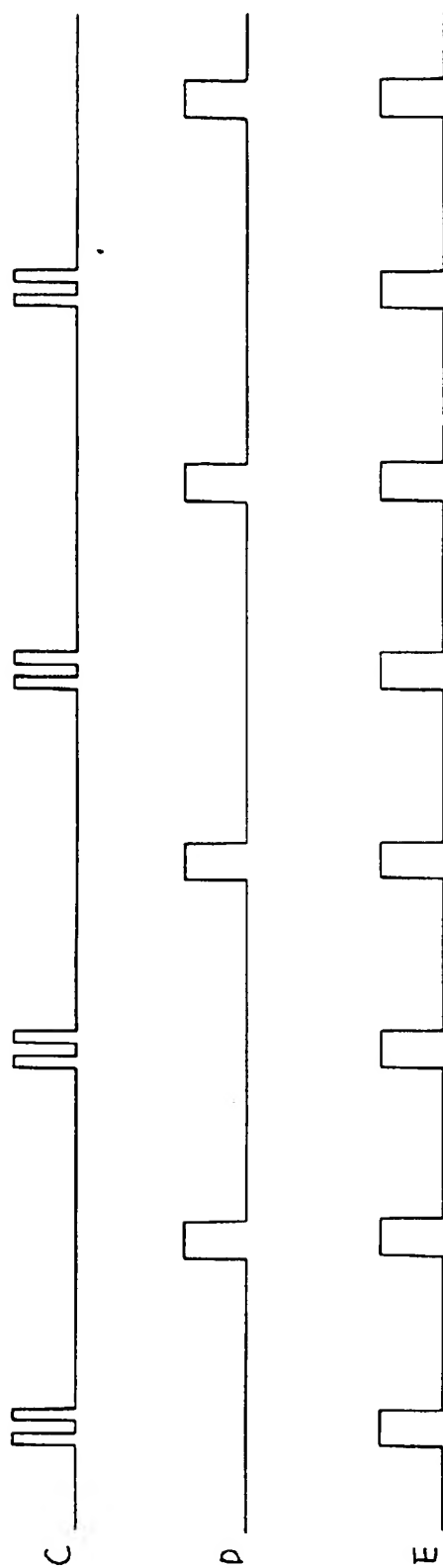


FIG. 6

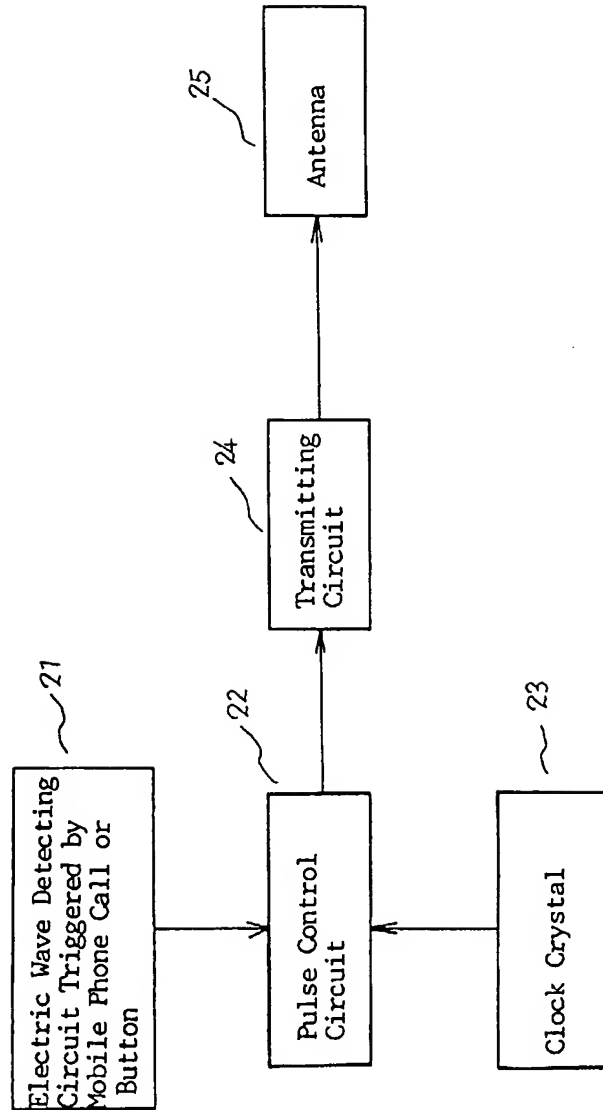


FIG. 7

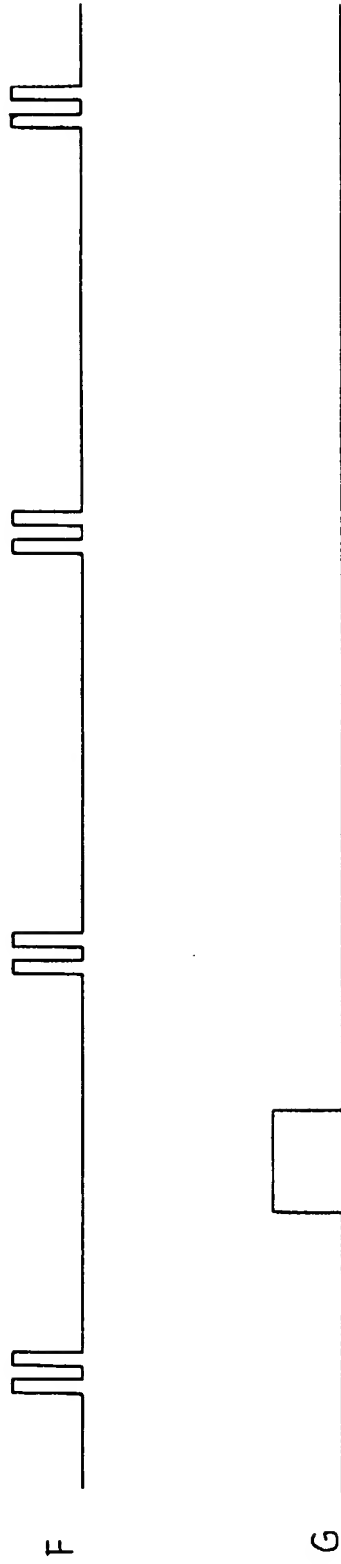


FIG. 8

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/BR 02/00159

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/BR 02/00159

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5 661 460 A (SALLEN ROY ET AL) 26 August 1997 (1997-08-26) column 1, line 43 -column 2, line 23 column 3, line 10 -column 4, line 59 column 5, line 18 -column 11, line 25 figures 1-7 -----	1-35
A	US 4 134 108 A (MILLER FAY H ET AL) 9 January 1979 (1979-01-09) the whole document -----	1-29
A	US 5 402 104 A (LAROSA LAZARO) 28 March 1995 (1995-03-28) the whole document -----	1-29